



For Immediate Release

Contact: Craig Orfield
(202) 224-6770

Wednesday, July 12, 2006

***ENZI APPLAUDS HOUSE APPOINTMENT OF CONFEREES,
ENCOURAGES SWIFT ACTION ON PERKINS CAREER AND
TECHNICAL TRAINING EDUCATION ACT***

Washington, D.C. - U.S. Senator Mike Enzi (R-WY), Chairman of the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee (HELP Committee), today applauded the House of Representatives for appointing conferees to finalize the "Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Improvement Act," a bill he said will "help close the gap that threatens America's long-term competitiveness," by addressing the needs of the nation's changing workforce.

"Reauthorizing the Perkins Act will help strengthen our workforce and enable America to compete and succeed in the global economy," Enzi said. "This legislation will require state agencies to work together on identifying the needs of the workforce and in designing job and skills training programs to match those needs."

"The education and training programs provided by the Perkins Act are too important to students, workers, businesses, local communities and our nation's economy to delay," Enzi said. "I urge the Senate follow the lead of the House and appoint conferees as soon as possible. Moving forward with a Conference Committee should be a top priority for Congress over the next few weeks."

Some estimates suggest that 60 percent of the jobs created in the next decade will require skills that only 20 percent of workers today possess, and that 80 percent of jobs will require education or training beyond high school. The Perkins Act, S. 250, is a critical piece of a comprehensive effort, which includes the Workforce Investment Act, the Higher Education Amendments Act, and Youthbuild, to train American workers to fill the good jobs being created.

S. 250 will improve programs authorized under the Perkins Act by requiring:

- **A More Effective Accountability System** - that aligns accountability requirements with other federal education and training programs;
- **Stronger Links to Businesses** - that build stronger partnerships between high schools, colleges, and businesses, so they can better meet the needs of the workforce, including small businesses;
- **Better Links from High School to College** - that require states to outline a logical sequence of courses, including high school and college courses, that will lead to an industry recognized credential, certificate, or postsecondary degree;
- **Stronger Academic Focus** - that promotes an enhanced emphasis on academic instruction for federally supported career and technical education programs consistent with other federal education programs such as “No Child Left Behind.”

The eight House members appointed as conferees are the Chairman of the House Education and the Workforce Committee, Rep. Howard P. “Buck” McKeon (R-CA), the Ranking Member of the Committee, Rep. George Miller (D-CA), Rep. Mike Castle (R-DE), Rep. Tom Osborne (R-NE), Rep. Marilyn Musgrave (R-CO), Rep. Mark Souder (R-IN), Rep. Lynn Woolsey (D-CA), and Rep. Ron Kind (D-WI).

###